

July 7, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell,

I am writing to ask that the FCC not impose new hidden charges and fees on prepaid calling card services.

Minorities, low-income families, senior citizens, immigrants, college students and military families rely upon calling card services for a variety of needs. Many of these consumers do not have a credit history, bank accounts, or the means to pay a large deposit for local telephone service. For these consumers, a prepaid card may be the only option they have to stay connected – to make phone calls to look for a job, for affordable housing, make a doctor's appointment, or stay in touch with family and friends. These cards offer convenience and predictable cost, as there are no hidden fees or charges. In economically disadvantaged areas, consumers literally risk being disconnected if the prices of these cards increase. Prepaid calling cards are indispensable to consumer groups because they are an affordable alternative to regular and wireless telephone services.

But such price hikes are precisely what the FCC will do if it inflicts new "in-state" access charges and other fees on pre-paid cards. The fees would funnel directly to large local telephone companies while the burden would fall squarely upon those consumers that can least afford to bear it.

Adding access charges to be paid to local telephone companies will substantially increase the per minute charges on pre-paid calls, jeopardizing the benefits Latino and other communities gain from these services. Please stop any effort to raise rates on American consumers and decide that these services are not subject to the exorbitant new access charges and other fees.

Sincerely,



San Antonio, TX

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
Senator  
Senator  
Congressperson

July 10, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell  
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Please stop any effort to raise the costs of pre-paid calling card consumers by deciding that these services are not subject to exorbitant new access charges and other fees.

Sincerely,

*Charles E. Smith, Missouri*

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
Senator  
Senator

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Sincerely,

*Helene J. Stephens, NJ*

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
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 LEWIS KANSAS

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps  
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Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
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Sincerely,

*Sonya McKeithan -VA*

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
Senator  
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Chairman Powell:

The FCC should **not** impose new access charges and fees upon prepaid calling cards. If you move to increase the cost of these cards, you will simply drive up the cost for minority or disadvantaged individuals to stay in touch in their communities.

The Latino community is particularly sensitive to any price increase for pre-paid calling cards; approximately 43% of Latino households use them. Indeed, half of the households with incomes below \$20,000 have used prepaid cards. Pre-paid calling cards are so prevalent in part because they save consumers money.

With gas and milk prices already holding fixed and low income consumers hostage, we should not be faced with rising telephone service costs as well. In particular, many low-income households who are on fixed incomes depend entirely upon prepaid service because they cannot meet the credit rating or hefty deposit requirements that local phone companies insist upon before getting a phone. With prepaid cards, consumers can make calls from payphones or the telephones of family members and neighbors. We can use these cards to stay "connected" as we look for jobs, hunt for houses, or schedule many of the other daily appointments that we all have.

I simply find it unimaginable that the FCC would impose new charges and fees on these cards. Some of the nation's largest telephone companies would be the largest beneficiaries of such charges. **The FCC should stand up for consumer interests over corporate gain by keeping affordable prepaid calling cards a priority.**

Sincerely,

 TEXAS

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
Senator  
Senator  
Congressperson

July 7, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell  
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RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:


Latino and other minority communities rely upon low-cost telecommunications services to accomplish many every day tasks, from looking for a job or affordable housing to staying in touch with family and friends. But pending before the FCC is a proposal that would introduce new charges and fees upon services upon which we depend, immediately harming millions of Latinos and other consumers nationwide.

I understand that the FCC is considering applying "in-state" access charges and other fees on certain prepaid calling card services. Many Latinos, particularly those on fixed incomes or those establishing a credit history, bank accounts and other means necessary to subscribe to local telephone service, rely upon these prepaid calling cards to stay connected at set affordable rates. Students, immigrants, senior citizens, and others face similar challenges.

As a result, prepaid calling cards are the only option available – without them, many consumers could, quite literally, be left without access to telephone service. Raising the price of prepaid calling cards will directly harm individuals who can least afford price increases.

Imposing in-state charges would amount to a substantial increase in the cost of prepaid calls, destroying the utility of calling cards to disadvantaged consumers. Allowing the large, local telephone companies to collect such charges, even when they do not sell the calling card to a customer, would drive up prices; thus making these services substantially less affordable. Please look out for consumers and refuse to impose new access charges and fees on prepaid calling card services.

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 Texas

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
Commissioner Kevin Martin  
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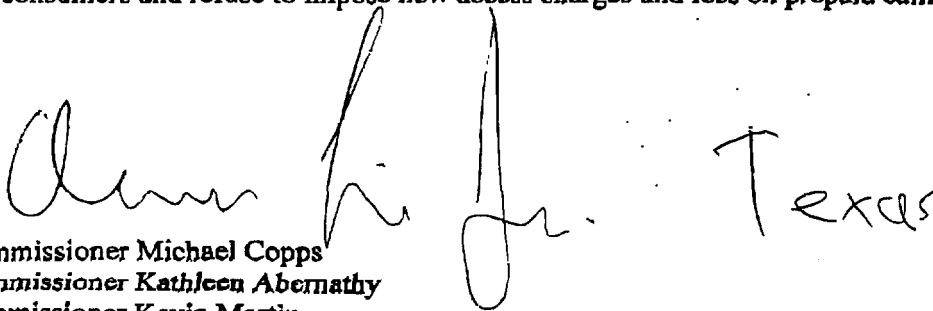
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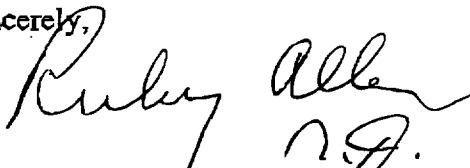
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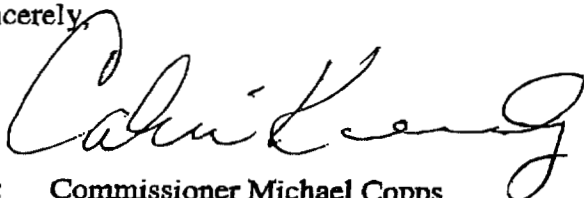
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Re: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to add my voice to the growing number of groups and individuals opposed to efforts by the local Bell telephone companies to circumvent current rules on calls placed with a pre-paid calling card. If they succeed, it will result in higher rates – in many cases, dramatically higher rates – for consumers who place the calls. As you approach your work on this docket, I implore you to keep the needs of consumers in mind rather than the pleadings of the four Bell companies.

The Bell companies want to target those calls in which a caller uses a pre-paid calling card and dials a toll-free number, along with his or her PIN. The caller, who may be in Virginia, for example, is connected to a "platform" in another state – let's say in Nebraska. From this "platform," he or she hears a message about a company, non-profit or person. The caller then dials the telephone number of someone in Virginia. Current rules, as well as common sense, state that this represents two calls, one from Virginia to Nebraska and one from Nebraska to Virginia. Both calls are subject to interstate access charges because there is a call to Nebraska and then a separate call to Virginia.

But the Bell companies want to treat this as a single in-state call so they can levy exorbitant in-state access charges. Such fees have no relationship whatsoever to the Bell companies' actual costs, which are only a fraction of what they want to charge consumers.

Prices are already rising for gas, milk and other products. Consumers don't need higher prices for phone calls too, especially when these higher rates represent a blatant giveaway to four large corporations.

I am aware that the long distance companies and others that sell pre-paid calling cards have weighed in with the FCC in an effort to protect their customers' interests in this manner. It is now time for the FCC to weigh in on the side of consumers and show the Bell companies the door on this issue.

Sincerely,

 *Indianan*

ccs: Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy  
Commissioner Michael J. Copps  
Commissioner Kevin J. Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein  
Senator  
Senator

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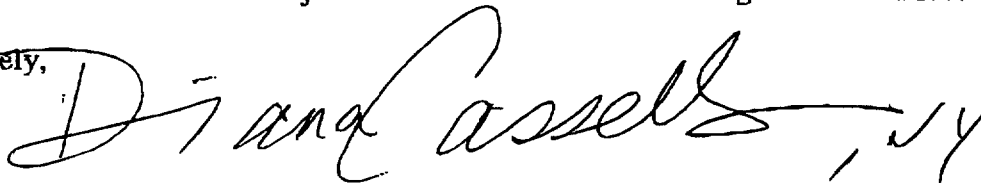
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Cassell", followed by a comma and the number "14".

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
Senator  
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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Laura Conroy", followed by a stylized circular flourish or monogram.

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps  
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Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
Senator  
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Sincerely,

*Carrie Alston, NJ*

ccs: Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy  
Commissioner Michael J. Copps  
Commissioner Kevin J. Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein  
Senator  
Senator





## growing leaders

July 13, 2004

The Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St., SW  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: MB Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

For over 20 years, Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc. (LEAP) has worked to achieve full participation and equality for Asian Pacific Americans (APAs), and actively supports increased civic participation by APAs. One issue recently brought to our attention is a proposal being considered by the Commission that would increase the fees consumers pay to use pre-paid calling cards. We urge you to oppose any proposal that would result in an increase in the cost of using pre-paid calling cards.

The population of APAs has doubled every decade and is projected to be the fastest growing group in the next decade. Perceptions and stereotypes continue to lump all APAs as a highly successful and the widely held assumption is that APAs are NOT part of a disadvantaged minority racial group. However, these assumptions overlook and ignore the fact that, there remains a disproportionate and significant number of APAs living in poverty. For these citizens living with low incomes, calling cards have become a valuable resource for maintaining contacts with neighbors and relatives. Calling cards offer those in our community, who exist on low incomes, a series of pay-as-you-go spending choices, making them a far more attractive – and affordable – option than subscribing to a monthly service.

The use of pre-paid calls by those living in poverty is not surprising. About 60% of card users earning less than \$20,000 annually use them on a regular basis. And Asian Pacific Americans are among the fastest growing users of pre-paid cards.

By imposing new fees to calls made via pre-paid cards, the FCC would be increasing costs for those who can least afford them and decreasing the buying power of all low-income card users. A regulatory shift such as this only stands to benefit the companies who need it least. On behalf of LEAP, I ask that you reject any proposals that would add new fees and charges to pre-paid calling cards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.D. Hokoyama", written over a horizontal line.

J.D. Hokoyama  
President & CEO  
Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc.

327 East 2nd Street Suite 226  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-4210  
Website: [www.leap.org](http://www.leap.org)

Phone: 213.485.1422  
Fax: 213.485.0050  
Email: [leap@leap.org](mailto:leap@leap.org)

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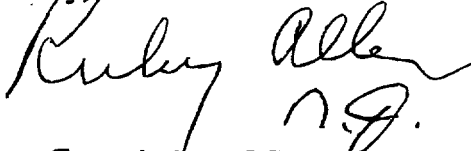
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In economically disadvantaged areas, consumers literally risk being disconnected if the prices of these cards increase. Prepaid calling cards are indispensable for these and other consumer groups because they are an affordable alternative to regular and wireless telephone services.

But such price hikes are precisely what the FCC will do if it inflicts new "in-state" access charges and other fees on pre-paid cards. The fees would funnel directly to large local telephone companies while the burden would fall squarely upon those consumers that can least afford to bear it. Adding access charges and fees will substantially increase the cost of providing pre-paid cards at affordable prices, jeopardizing the savings provided by these cards.

Please stop any effort to raise the costs of pre-paid calling card consumers by deciding that these services are not subject to exorbitant new access charges and other fees.

Sincerely,



ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
Senator  
Senator

July 10, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

Dear Chairman Powell:

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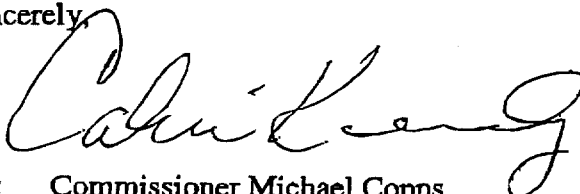
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I am writing to add my voice to the growing number of groups and individuals opposed to efforts by the local Bell telephone companies to circumvent current rules on calls placed with a pre-paid calling card. If they succeed, it will result in higher rates – in many cases, dramatically higher rates – for consumers who place the calls. As you approach your work on this docket, I implore you to keep the needs of consumers in mind rather than the pleadings of the four Bell companies.

The Bell companies want to target those calls in which a caller uses a pre-paid calling card and dials a toll-free number, along with his or her PIN. The caller, who may be in Virginia, for example, is connected to a "platform" in another state – let's say in Nebraska. From this "platform," he or she hears a message about a company, non-profit or person. The caller then dials the telephone number of someone in Virginia. Current rules, as well as common sense, state that this represents two calls, one from Virginia to Nebraska and one from Nebraska to Virginia. Both calls are subject to interstate access charges because there is a call to Nebraska and then a separate call to Virginia.

But the Bell companies want to treat this as a single in-state call so they can levy exorbitant in-state access charges. Such fees have no relationship whatsoever to the Bell companies' actual costs, which are only a fraction of what they want to charge consumers.

Prices are already rising for gas, milk and other products. Consumers don't need higher prices for phone calls too, especially when these higher rates represent a blatant giveaway to four large corporations.

I am aware that the long distance companies and others that sell pre-paid calling cards have weighed in with the FCC in an effort to protect their customers' interests in this manner. It is now time for the FCC to weigh in on the side of consumers and show the Bell companies the door on this issue.

Sincerely,



Indiana

ccs: Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy  
Commissioner Michael J. Copps  
Commissioner Kevin J. Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein  
Senator  
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diana Cassell", followed by a long horizontal stroke and a small mark resembling a comma or a stylized "y".

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy  
Commissioner Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
Senator  
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Sincerely,

*Carrie Alston, NJ*

ccs: Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy  
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Commissioner Kevin J. Martin  
Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein  
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*Charles E. Smith, M.D.*

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